



Runge Conservation Nature Center

# Habitat Happenings

January/February 2006

## Who's There?

Journal entry dated  
Saturday, October 23, 2005

Was awakened at 2 a.m. by a familiar, but surprising sound. Listened carefully and did not believe what I thought I heard - a Great Horned Owl! I got up and stood in the doorway and sure enough, as clear as could be, the familiar "hoot-hoot" of a Great Horned Owl. Wow! It



sounded so close and I strained to find it through the darkness. The moon was bright, but did not help to illuminate the owl. Later in the morning, around 6:30 a.m. the owl repeated its performance. Yippee! Twice in the same day!

Tonight I had an encore. It was around 6:15 p.m. and not quite dark when I heard it again. I looked and looked and was thrilled to find it high above the house sitting on a dead branch. It was very large and I could clearly see the two "ears" on top of its head. It was really fluffed up and when it hooted, it appeared to put its whole body into the call. I watched it for a long time. So very cool!

## Great Horned Owl Facts

- courting occurs as early as November
- nesting begins in January

- common year-round resident
- largest Missouri owl; 20-25 inches, 4 1/2 - 5 feet wingspan

- often called the "hoot owl"
- found in woodland, open country, and suburbs

- eats rats, rabbits, squirrels, mice, opossums, large and small birds
- protected by both state and federal governments

Written by Robin Grumm and Amber Edwards



# Volunteer News

## A year in review...

A crew of 40 volunteers donated nearly 7,000 hours, which equals 3 and a half years of full-time work.

Our volunteers presented or assisted with 193 nature center programs.

Our volunteers brought the conservation message to thousands of people in our community and surrounding communities including Jefferson City, Linn, Eldon, Columbia, Herman, California, and many others.



## Lobby Displays

### Nature Photography

*Jefferson City*

*Photography Club*

Good friendship and sharing the love of photography is the goal and motto lived and captured by the Jefferson City Photography Club. They share a passion, an interest, and a connection to each other and the camera. This camaraderie will flow into the Runge lobby for the next two months. The display focuses on the surrounding beauty of Missouri outdoors. Drop in and feel the serenity nature photos bestow on our moods.

### What is the Jefferson City Photography Club all about?

The club started in 1983 and now includes 40 members. They meet every 3rd Tuesday at the Missouri River Regional Library for a program. The program includes a photo contest and various training opportunities in photography.

## Thank you!

NuWay, Ewers Tires, Keith Contracting LLC, Bungart Auto Service, and Fischer Grain Farms for your generous donations to our Haunted Habitats event. This year we had over 1,800 people attend.

## Holiday Closings

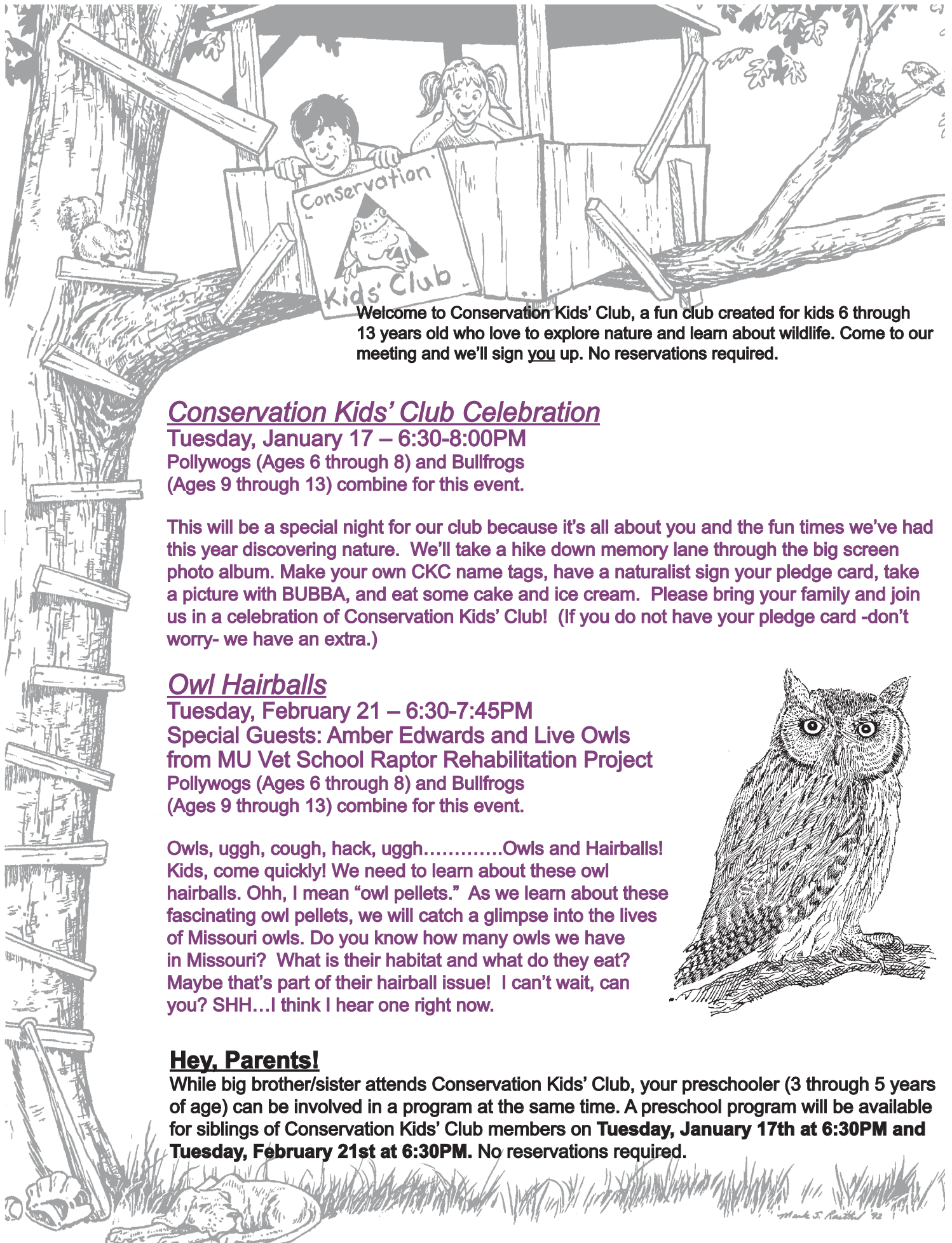
Runge Nature Center will be closed on the following days:

~Saturday, December 24th

~Sunday, December 25th

~Sunday, January 1st





Welcome to Conservation Kids' Club, a fun club created for kids 6 through 13 years old who love to explore nature and learn about wildlife. Come to our meeting and we'll sign you up. No reservations required.

### Conservation Kids' Club Celebration

Tuesday, January 17 – 6:30-8:00PM

Pollywogs (Ages 6 through 8) and Bullfrogs (Ages 9 through 13) combine for this event.

This will be a special night for our club because it's all about you and the fun times we've had this year discovering nature. We'll take a hike down memory lane through the big screen photo album. Make your own CKC name tags, have a naturalist sign your pledge card, take a picture with BUBBA, and eat some cake and ice cream. Please bring your family and join us in a celebration of Conservation Kids' Club! (If you do not have your pledge card -don't worry- we have an extra.)

### Owl Hairballs

Tuesday, February 21 – 6:30-7:45PM

Special Guests: Amber Edwards and Live Owls from MU Vet School Raptor Rehabilitation Project

Pollywogs (Ages 6 through 8) and Bullfrogs (Ages 9 through 13) combine for this event.

Owls, uggh, cough, hack, uggh.....Owls and Hairballs! Kids, come quickly! We need to learn about these owl hairballs. Ohh, I mean "owl pellets." As we learn about these fascinating owl pellets, we will catch a glimpse into the lives of Missouri owls. Do you know how many owls we have in Missouri? What is their habitat and what do they eat? Maybe that's part of their hairball issue! I can't wait, can you? SHH...I think I hear one right now.

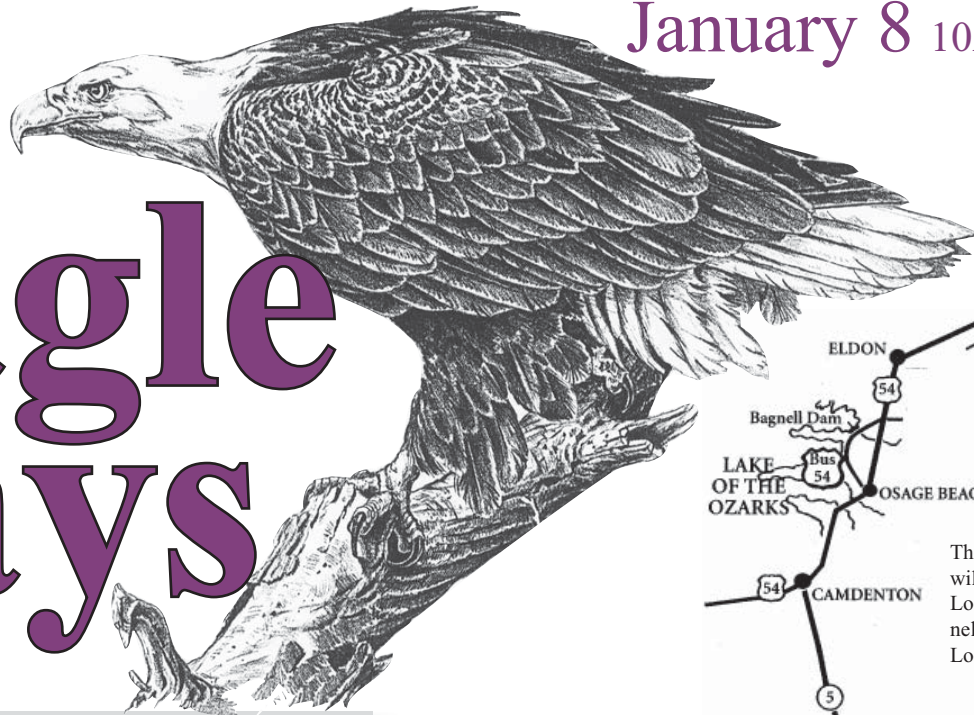


### Hey, Parents!

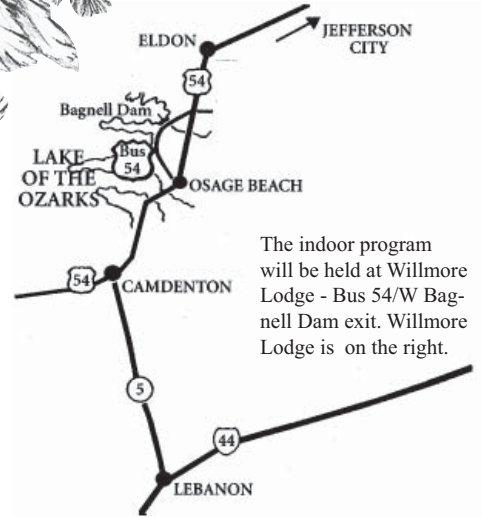
While big brother/sister attends Conservation Kids' Club, your preschooler (3 through 5 years of age) can be involved in a program at the same time. A preschool program will be available for siblings of Conservation Kids' Club members on **Tuesday, January 17th at 6:30PM** and **Tuesday, February 21st at 6:30PM**. No reservations required.

January 7 9AM - 4PM  
January 8 10AM - 4PM

# Eagle Days



~Wild eagle viewing sites with high-powered scopes at Bagnell Dam access.  
~Live eagles and staff from World Bird Sanctuary at Willmore Lodge.  
~Nature gifts will be for sale in Willmore Lodge.  
~Eagle watch cruises on the paddle wheeler Tom Sawyer (conditions permitting) on Saturday at 11AM, Noon, 1PM, and 2PM. \$4 per person. Sunday will be a rain date for cruises.



## Willmore Lodge~Lake Ozark

Sponsored by Runge Conservation Nature Center  
and the Lake Area Chamber of Commerce



### **Habitat Happenings**

Runge Conservation Nature Center  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 64102

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Jefferson City Missouri  
Permit No. 274



# January Events

To make a reservation, call after 8:00AM on January 2nd to register for these programs (573/526-5544.) If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend. Thank you.

**11 Wednesday**

## Runge Midweek Trekkers

*Time: 8:00AM-5:30PM*

*Ages: 18 years and older*

Take a hike! Come join our new hiking program! Runge Midweek Trekkers is a volunteer-led program designed to provide more opportunities for people to hike Missouri trails and learn about our plants, animals, and natural communities. Like the Runge Hiking Club, Midweek Trekkers is for beginner and experienced hikers alike. Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails. A volunteer naturalist will lead the hikes and point out highlights as we go.

**Binder Lake** contains 650 acres which support a variety of wildlife and provides a wide range of activities including hiking. We will hike the **Woodland Trail** (6 miles \*\*\*) and observe winter wildlife. Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

**12 Thursday**

## Birds, Latin America, and Missouri

*Time: 7:00-8:00PM*

*Ages: 18 years and older*

If you told people 100 years ago that many of Missouri's summer birds go as far as Latin America in winter, they would not have believed it. Science has come a long way since then! Today, more is known than ever before about the fragile life of neo-tropical migrants. Tonight hear Brad Jacobs, MDC Wildlife Ecologist, speak on "Bird Conservation in Latin America: A New Role for States." Find out what Missouri is doing to contribute to international bird conservation. Sponsored by the River Bluffs Audubon Society. No reservations required.

**18 Wednesday**

## Earth and Sky Try-It

*Time: 6:30-7:30PM*

*Ages: Girl Scout - Brownies*

Reservations required.

**19 Thursday**

## Nature's Needlers

*Time: 10:30AM-Noon and 6:00-7:30PM*

*Ages: 50 years and older*

Join us as we add bittersweet to our quilt habitat. Please bring with you a basic sewing kit, cutting implements, a towel or 20" square of muslin, pins, and pieces of fabric at least 18" x 22". Reservations required.

**21 Saturday**

## Runge Hiking Club

*Time: 8:00AM-Noon*

*Ages: 18 years and older*

See splendid sights! Learn about our wondrous state! Come join novice and experienced day hikers alike as we strap on our boots and go! Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails. A volunteer naturalist will lead the hikes and point out highlights as we go.

Come join the Runge Hiking Club for our annual New Year's hike. It's a tradition! We'll car pool to **Painted Rock State Forest** to hike the Osage Bluff Scenic Trail (1.6 miles \*\*\*\*\*), one of the most interesting and scenic trails in the state. We'll warm up by hiking up to 140-foot-high bluffs, down to the river level, and back up for magnificent views of the Osage river valley. We'll see ancient cedars, view remnants of a Native American burial cairn, and have a 50/50 chance of spotting a bald eagle. Bring water and hiking boots or comfortable shoes. Also, come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

**22 Sunday**

## Puppet Show: Winter at Runge

*Time: 2:00PM*

*Ages: All Ages*

It's winter at Runge's puppet theater. Snowy Owl has returned from her summer home, but her behavior is perplexing. Come watch our show and see if something is wrong. Will Red-tailed Hawk reveal the puzzle? Can Bald Eagle help unjumble things? Did Wood Rat confuse Snowy Owl on purpose? You may discover the answers before our puppets do! No reservations required.

## For the little ones

### Babes In The Woods

*Birth through 2 years of age*

The Babes In The Woods program is taking time off. We will return in the spring with fresh new programs for the youngest among us. Watch for those dates in the March/April issue of *Habitat Happenings*.

### Little Acorns

*3 through 6 years of age*

Thursday, January 12 – 10:00AM

Friday, January 13 – 10:00AM

Tuesday, January 17 – 10:00AM

Saturday, January 21 – 10:00AM

Tuesday, January 24 – 1:00PM

### King of Birds

Missouri is the winter home for hundreds of bald eagles. This month is a great time to see them and to learn more about them. What do they eat? How much do they weigh? Where do they nest? Find the answers to these questions and more at our program this month. Reservations required.

**25 Wednesday**

## Bear Achievement #5 Badge

*Time: 6:30-7:30PM*

*Ages: Cub Scouts*

Reservations required.

**Trail rating system** for the trails advertised for the Runge Hiking Club and Midweek Trekkers.

\*Easiest trail—flat terrain with no obstructions (like the Katy Trail)

\*\*Slight inclines and/or few obstructions (gravel, few rocks)

\*\*\*Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks or roots

\*\*\*\*Occasional significant inclines and/or rocks or roots

\*\*\*\*\*Most difficult—significant inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks

# Holiday Happenings

**December 27-30  
10AM - 4PM**

Visit Runge Nature Center as a part of your family's holiday tradition this year. Each day we will offer a variety of activities in the nature center lobby, walks on our trails, refreshments, games, and more! Some activities have scheduled times and others will be impromptu. Stop by and celebrate the season with us. No reservations required.

## Event Highlights

*Tuesday, December 27th*

*Sounds of the Season*

~Dulcimer Music at 11AM and 1PM

~Fireside Stories at 3PM

~Listening Walks

~Animal Calls

*Wednesday, December 28th*

*Food for the Animals*

~Puppet Shows at 11AM and 3PM

~Live Birds of Prey program at 1PM

~Aquarium Feeding

~Bird Feeder activity

~Bird Walks and Feeder Watches

*Thursday, December 29th*

*Animal Clues*

~Puppet Show at 11AM

~Fireside Stories at 1PM

~Animal tracks activity

~Animal artifact touch table

~Hike for animal clues

*Friday, December 30th*

*Recycle to Complete the Cycle*

~Paper making from 10AM to 1:30PM

~Winter Weed Hike at 3PM

~Crafts from recyclables from 2-4PM

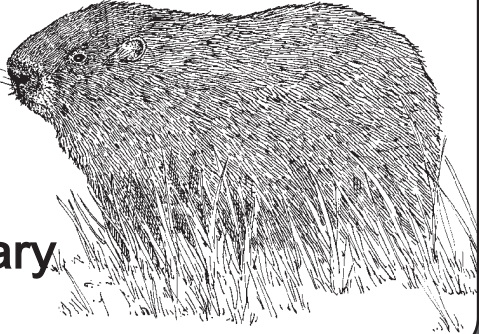


# February Events

To make a reservation, call after 8:00AM on February 1st to register for these programs (573/526-5544.) If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend. Thank you.

## Ground Hog Day

February 2nd



### 8 Wednesday Animal Try-It

Time: 6:30-7:30PM

Ages: Girl Scout - Brownies

Reservations required.

### 9 Thursday

#### Missouri's Magnificent Natural Areas

Time: 7:00-8:00PM

Ages: 18 years and older

Missouri has wonderful places throughout the state that are being managed to preserve their unique characteristics. Ken McCarty, DNR Natural Resource Manager, will talk about these great places and the work that is being done to keep them around for future generations. This program is sure to make you want to leave home and go exploring! Sponsored by the River Bluffs Audubon Society. No reservations required.

### 11 Saturday

#### Runge Hiking Club

Time: 8:00AM-5:00PM

Ages: 18 years and older

Scrivner Road Conservation Area, near Russellville, is 919 acres of rolling upland hills, grassland, and oak-hickory forest. We'll hike parts of the Moreau Creek Trail (8.5 miles \*\*), which consists of four interconnected loops and a long linear section. We'll encounter shallow stream crossings, ponds, fields, and forests. Hilltops will provide good views of Winegar Lake and the surrounding countryside. Bring water and hiking boots or comfortable shoes. Also, come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

## Nature Shop News

January/February featured item



WHERE EAGLES  
*Soar*

Experience the incredible return of  
America's national emblem to Missouri.

14-minutes DVD

Discounted Price: \$8.00

Heritage card discount does not apply.

20%  
OFF

Whether they're swooping to catch fish, perched, preening or feeding their young, the bald eagles in this video will command your attention. The video tells the story of the eagle's decline and return to Missouri.

## For the little ones

### Babes In The Woods

Birth through 2 years of age

The Babes In The Woods program is taking time off. We will return in the spring with fresh new programs for the youngest among us. Watch for those dates in the March/April issue of Habitat Happenings.

### Little Acorns

3 through 6 years of age

Tuesday, February 7 – 1:00PM

Thursday, February 9 – 10:00AM

Saturday, February 18 – 10:00AM

Tuesday, February 21 – 10:00AM

Friday, February 24 – 10:00AM

### Good Day, Good Night!

Hey, it's light outside, but some animals are sleeping. We'll pretend it's nighttime while we learn about nocturnal animals. Wear your pj's if you'd like. Shhhhhhhh. Don't wake them up! Reservations required.

### 11 Saturday

#### Puppet Show: Winter at Runge

Time: 11:00AM

Ages: All Ages

It's winter at Runge's puppet theater. Snowy Owl has returned from her summer home, but her behavior is perplexing. Come watch our show and see if something is wrong. Will Red-tailed Hawk reveal the puzzle? Can Bald Eagle help unjumble things? Did Wood Rat confuse Snowy Owl on purpose? You may discover the answers before our puppets do! No reservations required.

### 16 Thursday

#### Nature's Needlers

Time: 10:30AM-Noon and 6:00-7:30PM

Ages: 50 years and older

This month we will be working on one of Missouri's most common year-round birds of prey — the red-tailed hawk. Please bring with you a basic sewing kit, cutting implements, a towel or 20" square of muslin, pins, and pieces of fabric at least 18" x 22". Reservations required.



### Did you know?

The Great Horned Owl is a predator of the striped skunk. Owl senses are very keen—except for their sense of smell!

### 22 Wednesday

#### Runge Midweek Trekkers

Time: 8:00AM-5:30PM

Ages: 18 years and older

Three Creeks Conservation Area takes its name from the three creeks within its boundaries, Turkey, Bass, and Bonne Femme. The area has characteristics of a karst landscape including caves, sinks, and losing streams. We will hike the Three Creeks' Horse and Bicycle Trail (8 miles \*\*\*\*) to explore this diverse habitat. Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

### 22 Wednesday

#### Naturalist Badge

Time: 6:30-7:30PM

Ages: Cub Scouts - Webelos

Reservations required.

### 23 Thursday

#### Homeschool: Who Eats Who?

Time: 10:00-11:00AM

Ages: Homeschoolers 3-16 years

Owl pellets provide clues to the mysteries of the food chain. Learn what owl pellets are and dissect them to identify what's inside. Children 3 through 6 years of age will have their very own owl program. Reservations required.

## Attention Scouts!

Runge Nature Center is happy to offer assistance in meeting requirements for some nature-related scout badges. We have a variety of scout packs available with activities and information to assist you in your efforts. Please call Alane at 573/522-4115 ext. 3409 for more information or to reserve one of the following scout packs.

### Girl Scouts:

Brownie: Animal Try-It

Brownie: Plant Try-It

### Boy Scouts:

Wolf Cub: Bird Elective #13

Bear Cub: Achievement #5 Badge

Webelos: Naturalist & Forester Pack(s). Your choice of packs or a combination pack that has both badge requirements.

Don't see the badge you're interested in? We'd appreciate any suggestions for other badges for which we can provide assistance!

## Lewis & Clark Trunks Available

Runge Nature Center has Lewis and Clark Educational Resource Trunks available for two-week check-outs. These trunks give students a chance to handle tools and materials similar to those the expedition carried. They will also discover the importance of natural resources to the westward expansion. Lesson plans are included. Please call Alane at 573/522-4115 ext. 3409 to reserve a trunk.